



## VAPDC News

A publication of the [Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions](#)

### Issue 1, Spring 2021

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#### message from the president

What can we say about 2020 that hasn't already been said? As the COVID-19 pandemic threw a big curveball to our world and way of life, elected and appointed officials at all levels were faced with making quick decisions to ensure the continuity of government. Over the past year, they have had to respond, recover and recalibrate. It hasn't been easy, but everyone has been collaborating and working together to ensure the health and safety of their citizens.

The Planning District Commissions and Regional Commissions in Virginia pride themselves on collaboration and partnerships. They too, have been assisting their member governments in meeting these new challenges. Likewise, the VAPDC worked to provide support, information and assistance to its 21 regional members, by strengthening lines of communication with state officials, providing timely and informative programming (virtual, of course), and continuing with its Board and Executive Director meetings to keep the flow of information moving. We also are pleased that the critical work of PDCs, in recent months and recent years, led to some success at the recent General Assembly session, when some additional state financial support, lost in previous years, was restored.

While we are disappointed that we are not able to gather for our annual Summer Conference, we are planning now for some summer programming, and hope that our annual Board/Leadership Retreat can be face to face by the Fall. In the meantime, I wish you health and safety as we move into the warmer months of spring and summer.

**Kim Callis**  
VAPDC President

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#### get to know...LENOWISCO and Cumberland Plateau PDCs

The [LENOWISCO Planning District Commission](#) serves the Counties of Lee, Scott and Wise, along with the City of Norton. The Commission is recognized by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) as a Local Development District and by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) as an Economic Development District. LENOWISCO has been heavily involved in local infrastructure planning and development over the years, including Community Development, Economic Development, Transportation and Public Utility Infrastructure.



LENOWISCO prides itself on adjusting to the changing needs in the region. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the LENOWISCO localities jointly established a regional \$1.6 million grant fund, known as the LENOWISCO Regional Small Business Recovery Assistance program, to support the district's small and nonprofit business recovery efforts following the COVID-19 outbreak.

The LENOWISCO region is composed of about 1,388 square miles and is home to 87,591 people (Weldon Cooper Center estimate, July 1, 2020). The Chair of the LENOWISCO Board of Directors is Richard Leonard (Lee County) and the Executive Director is Duane Miller.



The Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission (CPPDC) is composed of the Counties of Buchanan, Dickenson, Russell and Tazewell, as well as the Towns of Bluefield, Richlands and Tazewell. The CPPDC prides itself on the numerous county, town and citizen leaders who have served the Planning District over its long history. The spirit of cooperation has served the localities well for more

than 50 years, as more than \$600 million in federal, state and regional grant and low-interest loan funds have been obtained for much needed water, sewer, telecommunications, industrial site and other infrastructure projects in the four counties.

The CPPDC has long been intricately involved in expanding broadband infrastructure throughout its region. Currently, it is facilitating the installation of 1,312 miles of fiber in its member counties through a partnership with Point Broadband. The project will provide access to more than 8,000 units, including 82 businesses.

The CPPDC region is composed of 1,826 square miles and has a population of 104,100 (Weldon Cooper Center estimate, July 1, 2020). The Chair of the CPPDC Board of Directors is Charlie Stacy (Tazewell County) and the Executive Director is Jim Baldwin.

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## upcoming events/calendar

- April 28, 2021—Board of Directors meeting
- May 3, 2021—Nominating Committee meeting
- May 25, 2021—Strategic Planning Committee meeting
- June 4, 2021—Executive Directors Committee meeting
- TBA—Summer Series (begins in early June)
- TBA—Annual VAPDC Business meeting (late July)



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## in the news

Representatives from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, and the Thomas Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District, along with the VAPDC Executive Director, gave a (virtual) panel presentation at the Environment Virginia Symposium last month. About 70 people attended the “Zoom” session. The presentation about the partnership that 15 PDCs have with DEQ on the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) technical assistance program went well!

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC), which conducts program evaluation and policy analysis for the General Assembly, met (virtually) recently with several PDC Executive Directors about the role of PDCs in addressing housing needs. A late 2020 JLARC resolution directed its staff to review the State’s housing needs and the role of state and local governments in addressing them. The resolution calls for a review of multiple aspects of housing needs, including factors that limit the supply of housing; the effectiveness of state and local programs to address housing needs; and the adequacy of coordination among state and local agencies that have a role in housing policies and services.

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## about vapdc

The **Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions (VAPDC)** is an organization comprised of the 21 Planning District Commissions/Regional Councils in Virginia. The PDCs joined together to create the VAPDC to share best practices and further regionalism across the State. VAPDC works to bring diverse resources together at the regional level in partnership with local, state, and federal entities to strengthen regions and the Commonwealth.



The purpose of the Association is to promote coordination and cooperation among the Commonwealth’s Planning District Commissions/Regional Councils to heighten their effectiveness and efficiency; provide mutual assistance and the exchange of ideas; and otherwise promote understanding for how PDCs/RCs can help save their regions and the Commonwealth time and money.

## association contacts

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thank you to our Virginia Partners for 2021



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